

UNF Digital Commons

University of North Florida  
**UNF Digital Commons**

---

Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Stamp Collection

Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Papers

---

1-28-1997

## Black Heritage Stamp Series: Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.

United States Postal Service. Stamp Division

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/hurst\\_stamps](https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/hurst_stamps)



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Black Heritage Stamp Series: Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. 1989. Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Papers. University of North Florida. Thomas G. Carpenter Library. Special Collections and Archives. UNF Digital Commons. [https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/hurst\\_stamps/5/](https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/hurst_stamps/5/)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Papers at UNF Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. Stamp Collection by an authorized administrator of UNF Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [Digital Projects](#).

© 1-28-1997 All Rights Reserved

Footer logo



Copyright U.S. Postal Service 1996

*Issue Date:* January 28, 1997

*Colors:* Modified PMS 5635 (gray), PMS 443 (gray), PMS 353 (green) and process black

*First Day City:* Washington, D.C.

*Image Area:* 0.84 x 1.41 inches or 21.3 x 35.8 millimeters

*Designer:* Richard Sheaff, Norwood, Massachusetts

*Stamps per pane:* 20 self-adhesive

*Typographer:* Richard Sheaff

*Plate Numbers:* "B" followed by four single digits

*Modeler:* Banknote Corporation of America

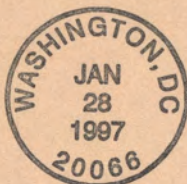
*Manufacturing Process:* Offset lithography

*Marginal Markings:* © USPS 1996, price, plate position diagram, plate numbers

# Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.

Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.'s military career reached its peak on October 25, 1940, when he was promoted to brigadier general in the U.S. Army. Born in Washington, D.C., Davis graduated from Howard University and entered the army in 1898 during the Spanish-American War. After the war, he served with the 9th Cavalry in the Philippine Insurrection in 1901; from 1905 to 1909, he was a professor of Military Science and Tactics at Wilberforce University in Ohio. He also served as Military Attaché to Liberia and as a professor of Military Science and Tactics at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

Over the years, through a series of temporary and permanent assignments, Davis moved up through the ranks. He was made a colonel in 1930 and a brigadier general in 1940. During World War II, he held a variety of posts in the European Theater of Operations and at the Inspector General's Office in Washington, D.C. Davis' awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Croix de Guerre from France, and the Star of Africa from Liberia. He died November 26, 1970.



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE





## AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVES

# Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.

On October 25, 1940, after 42 years of military service, Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., was promoted to Brigadier General.

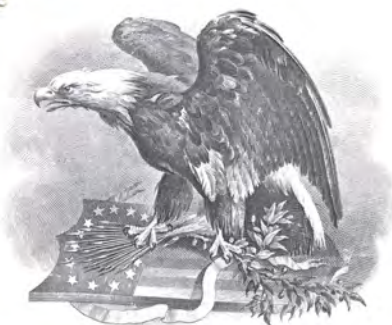
This stamp, the second photograph in the Black Heritage Series, shows Davis at the pinnacle of his military career, on an August 1944 inspection tour near the American front in France. Designer Dick Sheaff of Norwood, Massachusetts, used a U.S. Signal Corps photograph from the National Archives to create the image.

Born in Washington, D.C., in 1880, Davis attended Howard University, then entered the military in 1898, during the Spanish-American War. Rising through the ranks, Davis continued his service through World War II. In 1944, Davis advocated a racially integrated army, which was partially implemented in the final stages of the war.

During his career, Davis won numerous awards, including the Distinguished Service Medal, the French croix de guerre with palm, and the Bronze Star Medal. Davis also taught at Wilberforce University and the Tuskegee Institute. After serving as Assistant to the Inspector General in Washington, D.C., Davis finally retired in 1948.

Davis died in 1970, but his legacy lives on in his son, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., who graduated from West Point, and who retired in 1970 as a three-star general.

This stamp was issued on January 28, 1997 in Washington, D.C.



B 1 1 1

B 1 1 1



.32  
x20  
\$6.40

©  
USPS  
1996



B 1 1 1

PANE POSITION

B 1 1 1



**Benjamin Oliver Davis, Sr.**, born in Washington, D.C., was the first American of black heritage to become a general in the United States Armed Forces. In 1899, after a year in the infantry during the Spanish-American War, Davis enlisted as a private in the regular army. He served for two years in the Philippines and, in 1901, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the cavalry. In the following years, Davis served in various posts in the United States, until he was sent to Monrovia, Liberia, as military attaché, a post he held until 1912. Several times throughout his career he joined and rejoined the faculty of Wilberforce University in Ohio, teaching military science both there and at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. During World War I, Davis was promoted to major and to full colonel in 1930. In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt promoted Davis to brigadier general, making him the first man of color to become a general officer in the United States military.



**FIRST DAY OF ISSUE**

**During World War II**, Davis served as special adviser to the commander of the European Theater (ETO) and as assistant to The Inspector General in Washington, D.C., in charge of a special section dealing with racial matters. In 1944, he persuaded the Army to try a limited form of integration. For these activities, he received the Distinguished Service Medal (1944) and the Bronze Star (1945). After serving fifty years, Davis finally retired from the Armed Forces in 1948 and died in 1970.

#### **The United States Postal Service**

proudly honors Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., with the issuance of a 32-cent commemorative stamp, the twentieth in the Black Heritage stamp series. The stamp features General Davis while on an inspection tour near the American front in France in August 1944.

ANACOSTIA-ARMY ★ BALLOU-AIR FORCE ★ BELL MULTICULTURAL-NAVY ★ CARDOZO-ARMY ★

#### **PRELUDE**

Dunbar High School Band

#### **CADET ASSEMBLY**

JROTC Units, DC Public Schools  
Colonel Joseph Nickens, Sr., Director  
Military Science

#### **PRESIDING**

Donnie Simpson  
Morning Drive Air Personality  
WPGC FM

#### **NATIONAL ANTHEM**

Robin Jones, Stamp Development  
U.S. Postal Service

#### **INVOCATION**

Chaplain Major General Arthur S. Thomas  
U.S. Air Force

#### **WELCOME**

Major General Warren L. Freeman  
Commanding Officer  
DC National Guard Armory

#### **INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS**

Donnie Simpson

#### **REMARKS**

Major General Marcelite J. Harris  
U.S. Air Force

#### **DRILL EXERCISE**

Dunbar High School JROTC

#### **INTRODUCTION OF DEDICATING OFFICIAL**

Robert F. Harris, Vice President  
Diversity Development, U.S. Postal Service

#### **DEDICATION OF STAMP**

Honorable LeGree S. Daniels  
Governor, U.S. Postal Service

#### **REMARKS**

Lieutenant General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.  
USAF (Ret.)  
Son of Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.

#### **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

LeGree S. Daniels

#### **CLOSING REMARKS**

Donnie Simpson

#### **HONORED GUESTS**

Elnora Davis McLendon  
Daughter of Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.

The Honorable Sheila Widnall  
Secretary of the Air Force

Major General Russell C. Davis  
Vice Chief, National Guard Bureau

Members of Original Tuskegee Airmen

Buffalo Soldiers

Dr. Marvin E. Fletcher  
Author

*America's First Black General*  
*Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. 1880-1970*

★ WILSON-ARMY ★ WOODROW ★ SPRINGARN-ARMY ★

★ COOLIDGE-ARMY ★ DC STREET ACADEMY-ARMY ★ DUNBAR



January 28, 1997 ★ National Guard Armory ★ Washington, DC

# BENJAMIN O. DAVIS, SR.



## *The Village Blacksmith*

*Each morning we see some task begun,  
Each evening sees its close  
Something attempted something done  
To earn a night's repose.*

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

# BENJAMIN O. DAVIS, SR.

Cover Photograph: UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

Back Cover Photograph: Courtesy of the National Archives.

Ceremony Program Design & Layout: Roberta Wojtkowski Design.

© 1997 U.S. Postal Service. All Rights Reserved.



Rodney Lawrence Hurst Sr. Papers  
Thomas G Carpenter Library  
Special Collections